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it a convenient manual for reference. An elementary treatise on electricity, descriptions of the various telegraph-instruments used at different periods or in different places, the various applications of the telegraph, the construction of telegraph-lines, terrestrial magnetism, and galvanism, all come within his plan ; and nearly every topic is illustrated with woodcuts, well engraved, and printed in the best manner.

9. — *History of the Town of Gloucester, Cape Ann, including the Town of Rockport.* By JOHN J. BABSON. Gloucester : Procter Brothers. 1860. 8vo. pp. xi. and 610.

GLOUCESTER is one of the oldest towns in this Commonwealth, and was incorporated only twelve years after the settlement of Boston. But before that period the facilities which it offered for carrying on the fisheries had attracted notice ; and as early as 1623 an attempt was made to establish a permanent fishing-station on the western shore of its principal harbor. This attempt failed of success, and after the colony had dragged out a precarious existence for about three years, the station was abandoned. For several years afterward the history of Gloucester is involved in much obscurity ; and it is doubtful when the first permanent settlement was made, though Mr. Babson is inclined to place it in 1633. In that year, it is believed, a small party crossed the Bay from Plymouth for the purpose of establishing a fishing-station ; and some members of this party are supposed to have remained at Gloucester. They were joined by immigrants from other places, and in 1642 the number of residents was large enough to justify incorporation. A considerable number of these later settlers established themselves at such a distance from the shore as to warrant the belief that they did not look to the fisheries as the chief means of support ; and it was not until many years afterward that the inhabitants again became largely engaged in this uncertain business. With the revival of prosperity after the formation of the Constitution of the United States, their attention was again directed to it ; and so many persons engaged in it that in 1810 a petition was presented to the Massachusetts Legislature for a modification of the militia laws, apparently on the ground that they operated unfavorably on the interests of the fishermen. Accordingly, in the early part of 1811, an act was passed exempting fishermen, while actually employed as such in the service of any citizen of the United States, from the performance of militia duty ; and this act remained in force until October, 1814, when it was repealed. This petition and the exemption to which it led curiously illustrate the ex-

tent of the Gloucester fisheries at the time ; and they are among the few significant facts which appear to have escaped Mr. Babson's notice. Since that period the cod and mackerel fisheries of Gloucester have increased to such an extent that they now exceed in value those of any other place in the United States ; and notwithstanding the great increase of the population they continue to give employment to a large proportion of the male inhabitants.

Like nearly all of our New England towns which have passed their second centennial, Gloucester has a history of various and often of stirring interest, though the town suffered little during the French and Indian wars, and was never garrisoned by hostile troops. Apart from the local value which every town history possesses in some measure, there is enough of general interest in the annals of Gloucester to make us welcome Mr. Babson's volume with much satisfaction. He has approached his subject with a just sense of its requirements ; he has devoted many years to a thorough and conscientious study of it ; and he has been unwearied in the collection of materials. His style is simple and lucid ; and his arrangement of topics orderly and natural. He has carefully avoided the extravagance of statement into which local pride often leads the historian of a small community ; and he has narrated the various incidents in the history of his native town without any exaggeration of their importance.

He has very properly devoted his introductory chapter to a topographical description of Cape Ann, which is rendered still more intelligible to the reader by an excellent map. This is followed by a carefully prepared summary of the early voyages to New England, commencing with Gosnold's voyage in 1602, and coming down to the first attempt at a settlement on Cape Ann in 1623. The third chapter traces the history of this attempt, and closes with the dispersion of the little band of colonists, — a part of whom removed to Salem and there renewed the attempt under more favorable circumstances. In the fourth chapter we have an account of the first permanent settlement on the Cape, together with notices of the first settlers and their descendants ; and the remainder of the volume comprises a narrative of the principal events connected with the history of Gloucester from its incorporation to the present time, with a short chapter on the separate history of Rockport since 1840. This narrative is interspersed with brief notices of prominent citizens, and is further enriched by a very admirable description of the town as it appeared at the close of the Revolution. The Appendix contains a copy of the original charter granted by Lord Sheffield in 1623-4 ; complete lists of the principal town officers and representatives to the General Court ; the population

of Cape Ann at different periods ; some interesting statistics in regard to the fishing business ; and a few other documents. Beside the map already referred to, the volume is illustrated by lithographs of the former meeting-house of the First Parish, and of Gloucester harbor as it appeared in 1837, and by a few woodcuts, including a view of the oldest house on the Cape. We ought to add that the volume has a very good Table of Contents and an Index, and that its typographical appearance deserves much praise.

Mr. Babson, as we have remarked, has gathered up and preserved much curious and interesting information in respect to every period in the annals of Gloucester ; and we presume that his volume omits few matters of local interest. In two or three instances, however, he would have materially enhanced the worth of his labors if he had been somewhat more minute and exhaustive in his statements. Thus in his valuable chapter on the early settlers and their families there is a much greater paucity of both names and dates than we should have anticipated ; and we should have been glad to find a fuller account of the early struggles of the Gloucester Federalists and Democrats, since Essex County was the field of many important political movements, and nowhere did party spirit run higher than it did at Gloucester. With the qualification implied in this remark, we are inclined to bestow high praise on Mr. Babson's labors, and to include his volume among the most interesting and useful contributions to this department of historical research.

10. — *History of the United States from the Discovery of the American Continent.* By GEORGE BANCROFT. Vol. VIII. Boston: Little, Brown, & Co. 1860. pp. 475.

THIS is the second volume of the *History of the Revolution* ; and eminent as was Mr. Bancroft's success in the six volumes of ante-Revolutionary history, the two of the new series which have appeared will, we think, effect more than the preceding for his permanent reputation. His style is more nearly level with his subject than before ; and this for two reasons, — in part because he is less vehement and declamatory than formerly, and in part because the successive scenes of the Revolutionary drama, rising as they do into epic grandeur, demand in him who would worthily portray them a patriot's fervor and a poet's fire. Mr. Bancroft's narrative has much of the vividness of a contemporary sketch. He has not only consulted authorities, but has thrown his own imagination back into the heart of the last century, and has passed in thought through the varied and startling experiences of a generation now almost extinct.